arises but rarely. Furthermore, if a daughter is required to perform similar duties for her father, she will undertake this obligation only with the lament: ojoy ɔ̃ma ɛ̃kí 'm wɛ́mɛ́kɛ́, "I have come to see where I had my origin." Any woman who has been in that position will later know no oath more sacred than this one: la lotaké wɛ̃ falé bɔ́kí 'm wɛ̃́nɛ́kɛ́ la mpaka, "by my father's nakedness which I saw when he was old."

Thus we can draw the conclusion that the Nkundó are offended by nakedness and as a rule do not tolerate it. The exceptions do not invalidate this generalization; on the contrary, they tend to support it.

2. Speech. Obscenities and propriety.

In general the Nkundó see nothing wrong with using obscene expressions. They only describe them as "bad" if they become indecent.

If a conversation touches on matters of sex, they may wonder whether a particular topic is necessary, interesting, or entertaining; they will not ask themselves whether it is moral. For it will be apparent throughout this study they have no concept of morality strictly speaking.

The Nkundó possesses a varied and extensive list of obscene words -- nor is he alone in this respect. [58] We are not compiling a dictionary, and therefore we will not list them. What interests us are the circumstances that make these words indecent and under which a proper use of them impossible. The circumstances provide us with a criterion of the degree of obscenity of a word or expression. Let us say at once that we include in this category not only terms applied to organs and phenomena which are of a sexual nature strictly speaking, but also words pertaining to certain anatomical parts or physiological functions such as, for example, excretion, hair and tattooing found on private parts, and the female garment called efufa. We should also point out that some tribes will consider expressions obscene which do not shock others at all.

which do not shock others at all. (1)

1. These comments are applicable also to peoples in other parts of the world.

The general rule of decorum among the Nkundó permits the use of such terms only among equals. Their use when speaking to inferiors is tolerated but not approved of. The use of obscenities when speaking to any strangers meets with definite disapproval. Among persons of different sexes the prohibition is particularly strict.

Nevertheless, the use of these expressions is judged less severely if they are uttered in a moment of anger or as a reprimand, even in the presence of a member of the opposite sex.

Exclamations of anger, vexation, and sorrow are often nothing but obscenities!(2). No one is shocked by them in such situations.

2. See "Les Coutumes Funéraires" [Funeral Customs], No. 1, to be published in Anthropos.

Some elderly or more modest persons do not make use of them, however; if the habit of using a particular expression is thoroughly ingrained, they may make a slight change in its pronunciation (as is common for some of our "swear words").

To circumvent the difficulties caused by the need to use certain words frequently, [59] euphemisms are coined to take their place. Thus the Nkundó say: ótswé lokako w'ákúsa, "I am going behind the house," to indicate that they are going to urinate, and ótswé ŋgondó, "I am going for small pieces of firewood," or ŋótswé ótóna lokótó, "I am going to pick a leaf," meaning that they are going to the toilet. On the way they say: ótsta kélé, "I am leaving the path" or "I am going to the forest." A husband is permitted to use accurate terminology when speaking to his wife, but it is considered very improper for her to do so in speaking to him.

When someone is satisfying a natural need, others keep a distance away from him; they will not even speak to him. Moreover, the person would not reply even if he were called. A woman will not

even answer her husband, but he may indicate his presence by coughing lightly.

Any infraction of these rules is considered a grave insult. A person offended in this manner may seek revenge by violent means, either personally or through the medium of his son, brother, etc. According to native justice he will always be in the right, even if the quarrel becomes bloody. The simple act of uttering obscenities while passing in front of a house in which there is someone who is entitled to the speaker's respect may result in reprisals by the latter. (1)

1. See Jadot, Blancs et Noirs au Congo belge [Whites and Blacks in the Belgian Congo], p. 90.

Crude language is especially reprehensible and wounding if it contains allusions to incest or other reflections on a relative whom the speaker wants to insult. And it must be admitted that such expressions may go beyond the limits (for example: coi cum patre, matre, fratre, sorore, etc.). In connection with this topic it should be noted that reference is always made to a relative of the opposite sex to that of the person who is directly or indirectly being addressed. Furthermore, licentious talk and the use of indecorous language are more severely condemned when they take place in the presence of women and old people [66] or are said by a slave in front of his master, by a Bosowa in front of a Boord (1).

1. See Introduction, footnote 2, p. 4.

If a man catches anyone uttering obscenities in front of his wife, especially if they are addressed to her personally, he can start action in adultery proceedings. If the woman refuses to listen to the seducer, she will not answer him, or sometimes, annoyed at the insult, she may retort by insulting his mother. She can complain, but generally she does not do so. Is she ashamed, or is she afraid that the tempter might make public some excess in her conduct which he has discovered? In any case a woman is more sensitive than a man to the

far the most inventive tribe. All the dances have two distinguishable parts: the dance strictly speaking and the finale or likeyo. The latter consists of acrobatic exhibitions or a theatrical performance. It varies with each performance and sometimes goes beyond the limits of decency, especially in certain scenes of the women's dances. Here everything depends on the attitude of the actors and spectators.

The words sung are usually proper. Passages that may be less so occur only exceptionally. The exclamations of some of the male or female dancers, but mostly those of the audience when the intensity of the performance reaches a climax, are somewhat less innocent. Thus this climax [62] is the weak spot morally speaking. This is true especially of the dances performed by the women who, led on by their passion and encouraged by the cheering and applause of the spectators, make provocative movements (bisfid, bembidjo). A European will see nothing wrong, but the native knows the gestures and their meaning. The spectators then applaud with even greater enthusiasm, either because of sexual feelings or out of aesthetic enjoyment, for to them these movements are beautiful. All the artistic dances for women which are the fashion at the present time contain a similar phase of exaggerated excitement. It is therefore understandable that in the past the elders strictly forbade children and adolescents to attend these dances.

After what has just been said, no one will be astonished to hear that these great dances are often the cause of adultery and divorce. And to a limited extent the same can be said for the men's dances, for masculine beauty is exhibited in an enticing manner.

The rhythmic motions which sometimes accompany singing during drinking parties cannot really be called dances; nothing shocking is implied by them and the words of the songs are seldom improper. Salacious songs are rarely sung in the course of daily living, but they are never omitted from funeral ceremonies.

Up to now we have spoken of artistic dances, which are always very popular. They were -- and are -- reserved for certain special occasions. For ordinary circumstances the Nkundó have a few little entertaining dances which have nothing at all in common with the dance as such. They are more like games. The lyrics of the songs

may be ribald, but this occurs rather rarely. However, at the present time, they are often actually obscene -- especially since "European-style" dancing has been introduced, and more particularly in the centers, small and large, and among those who have come under [63] its influence. This kind of dancing for amusement is chiefly practiced by young people.

To the credit of morality it should be noted that mixed dancing is unknown to strictly native ways. It occurs in the centers (in the form of the mixed bofenya or the balifiga, grotesque imitations of European dances) but is spreading -- and rapidly -- to the villages of the interior. The second variety especially raises havoc, for it has a deleterious influence on morality. It has been the cause of a number of cases of adultery, divorce, palavers, and quarrels, and has been forbidden by certain chiefs and headmen, who would like to be able to severely punish anyone who dances it.

Conclusion

The data presented in the foregoing section forces us to conclude that sexual modesty does exist among the Nkundó. The wearing of clothing, the various prohibitions, the attitude of the older and wiser members of the community show that they experience this feeling. It is the same here as elsewhere. In certain areas it is even carried to an extreme. The exceptions should be attributed to individual deviations; and because of the reactions they provoke, they even provide conclusive evidence. The general laxity which may be observed on some special occasions does not provide material for a serious objection against the existence of modesty. Yet it is difficult to determine the reason for such an attitude which seems to contradict the rest of our data. Should it be interpreted as a yielding to human weakness, or seen as a weakening of public morality? Or is it not rather because these special circumstances make an unfavorable interpretation of such actions impossible? An allusion made in public, in a group, [64] does not have the same significance as that same allusion may have between two people, where it implies a suspicious intimacy.

304 and "modern" fashions, as well as some ancient ones, take this into
332 account. In the next paragraph, moreover, we will note ananalogous phenomenon.

Both of the explanations given can be defended, since each has its value. But it seems to me preferable not to oppose them but rather to bring them together, as they probably are in the thinking of the native.

It should also be noted that a man never performs the operation of making a sexual tattoo on a woman, although a woman may indeed operate on a man. And finally it should be mentioned that the
• [331] specific terms designating these tattoos are considered as obscenities.

The practice of tattooing is decreasing at the present time.
[178] Many boys are already without tattoos. But very few girls lack them; among them the fad has not disappeared. Some even have themselves tattooed without the knowledge of their parents and in spite of their opposition. Among the Blacks, as everywhere in the world, fashion is deeply rooted because it is natural. But the designs of the tattoos are now becoming smaller. It seems to me that this change is due, not to a reaction against tattooing as such, but rather to a modification of the style. For tattooing is a real fashion, and like all fashions it is subject to change and development. Nowadays there is a tendency to imitate the designs of other peoples of the Congo. Elsewhere, as among the Inj[illegible], for example, an internal evolution may be observed, although it is occurring under foreign influence. The evolution is taking place chiefly in the face motifs, while those of the body are beginning to be omitted. But the sexual tattoos do not seem to be disappearing. [69]

4. Bead Belts

291 From an early age the Nkundó child is adorned with a belt of
301 trading beads. Before the coming of the Europeans this decoration
332 made its appearance only towards puberty and was restricted to girls. Nowadays, many men also adorn themselves in this manner. And since it is now easier to obtain the beads, women are no longer with a single string but wear several in assorted colors. They add smaller ones below the knee.

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391
892 According to what I have been told, this type of ornament may also have a sexual significance. Normally -- and this statement is applicable only to the present time -- the beads are entirely covered by clothing and are visible only on a few occasions. If a large number of strings (as many as six, eight, or ten) or very many beads are worn, attention may be attracted to them because there will be a bulge in the clothing worn over them. Their sound will reveal their presence during a race or a dance. And according to my informants, that is enough to awaken passion. Making an allusion to the beads and especially touching them deliberately is considered as an invitation. For her part, a woman sometimes rubs them together in her fingers so that they will make their characteristic noise and thus attract a man's attention and arouse his interest.

The preceding does not mean that simply the wearing of the beads is necessarily intended for a bad purpose. Not only must such an intention be excluded in the case of serious persons, especially if they are elderly and content themselves with wearing a single string, seldom a second one to support the first. But there is also the possi-
[892] bility that a young Black beauty may adorn herself with ten or more strands out of sheer vanity, so that the whole world may see that she has so many. [70]

Furthermore, it has been shown that attention to appearance is not necessarily directed to another person. Though that may be generally true, many people like to dress for the pleasure of being well dressed, and girls who never dream of an adventure may still enjoy wearing pretty undergarments. This desire for adornment for its own sake can, no doubt, explain the belts, as well as other embellishments on more than one Nkundó woman.

We should add that those who adhere to the theory that the tattoos have an immediate sexual influence could apply such a theory here as well.

302 5. Depilation
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All Nkundó of both sexes practice depilation of the genital organs and even the armpits. The natives believe that the hair growing

502 under the arms is related to sexuality and give it the same name as
851 they use for their pubic hair.

A person removes his or her own hair, or it is removed by a friend of the same sex. Formerly, the hairs were simply pulled out. Nowadays, many people shave with a knife. Moreover the practice tends to be confined to the hair connected with sexuality, but in the past everything was removed: eyebrows, eyelashes, mustaches, beards.

For the Nkundó hair removal is a form of beauty care. Their
302 explanation must be accepted, though the term "beauty care" must be broadly defined so that it will include also the depilation of parts of the body that are always hidden. This last form however, might have some relation to the tattoos: it makes tattooing easier and its effect more obvious. [71]

Article III. Prostitution

The dictionary defines prostitution as follows: "a trade which
598 consists in providing one's body for the pleasures of the public in exchange for money." In addition to this limited sense, the most important aspect of which is "in exchange for money," the word also has several broader meanings.

Prostitution is found in the world in various forms: 1) the kept woman, 2) the brothel, 3) the professional streetwalker, 4) the occasional streetwalker, 5) the married woman who has a steady relationship with a lover who pays her, 6) the woman who is the concubine of a number of men in succession and who is paid by each of them. We will examine the forms under which this misconduct has occurred and occurs among the Nkundó.

The first question we should ask is whether a Nkundó woman gave herself to a man for profit before the European occupation. It is true that a woman [illegible] but, as we have already said, it is very difficult to determine whether she did so for gain or simply to be reassured of her lover's affection. Knowing the mentality of the Nkundó women of today, we must admit that her greed sometimes brings her to acts of venal love. One or another of them has no doubt given her body in order to possess various

832 husband will change to revulsion, and she will leave him to be with her charmer.

Part 3

The Search for a Wife

When a young man old enough to marry believes he has the 834 means to do so, he goes out to seek a wife. Naturally, he knows a number of girls, and as a rule he has no trouble finding one who suits him. The courtship is quite simple. As everywhere there are meet- [103] ings, visits, chats, and jokes, but there is no romanticism or sentimentality, for they are absolutely unknown to these peoples. Since they are in a hurry [103] to reach the objective of their relationship, namely conjugal life, -- and their progress toward this goal is facilitated by usages and customs -- there remains little time for poetry.

There is no specific term for courtship itself. The Nkundó simply speak of "talking with a woman," soɔja bómoto, "looking for a woman," asa bómoto. The girl who is its object is referred to as bombéyé (or boambé among the Inɔ́nd).

First, the young man addresses his proposals to the girl: "ólanga tɔkɔlɛ́ (tɔkɔmbélɛ) la wɛ́ɛ́", "I want to take you for wife." She shows her agreement by saying, "tɔ́ɔlanga wɛ́ ngí tɔ́ɔ́, "I love you also," or more frequently, "olɔ́kɛ́ ɔ́ wɛ́, "as you wish," jɛ́ɛ́ ɔ́ lɔ́kɛ́, "it's up to you," or something of this sort. (1)

1. Note that for the Nkundó these expressions have quite a different significance than would appear from the words. They express a real agreement and an explicit and personal consent. In fact it is considered improper for a woman to use a more direct expression.

834 The lovers exchange gifts. The girl gives food which her 93 mother has provided, or which she has been able to procure herself.

5) The desire to increase the number of children is one of the reasons most frequently given; it is the chief, and sometimes the only, one cited by ethnographers. There is no question that it has a great deal of validity, for the Nkundó like to have many children. It is one of the things on which they pride themselves as well as a powerful means for reinforcing a social position (and we are thus led back to the first reason cited).

The question of knowing whether polygamy actually does favor the birth rate is irrelevant here, even if the results of a comparison were clearly against this system and were it proved that "the more wives a polygamist has, the fewer children he has." For the Nkundó never make this statistical computation. He sees only the principle: several women give more children than one. And for them, that is the gist of the matter. Furthermore, the interest of the people as a whole does not appear on the horizon of the Nkundó's thoughts and feelings: they think only of themselves, and in their egoism, they consider only their own interests.

6) To all these reasons given by the Nkundó to justify the practice of polygamy, we must add a sixth, which they never mention, sensuality. Without colonization it would have been difficult for us to make this statement. [374] But the new state of affairs shows several flaws in our people's arguments. We have already pointed out some of them. Furthermore, all the reasons mentioned up to now do not suffice to account for the existence of polygamy. They do not explain why in the past the old man wanted to keep all the women to themselves, or why a given individual becomes a polygamist. It is a fact that for more than one man none of these alleged reasons have been involved. It is also known that several natives have acquired fortunes by European work (as clerks, salesmen, traders, etc.) in order to be able to establish a harem, though there could have been no motive of vanity or gain in social influence. On the basis of my knowledge of circumstances, persons, and places, I am convinced that even for some natives living in their villages, the primary purpose was clearly sexual. I am acquainted with more than one such case.

595 And it is not difficult to understand this fact. For indeed
●631 polygamy constitutes a legitimate and easy means by which a man may enjoy several women without being bothered by palavers, difficulties, etc. The mentality of many men who care little about moral laws as well as the tendency of a disordered instinct to multiply its objects only confirm this observation. Often one sees men who were monogamists at first begin by taking a second wife out of passion. Then gradually their passion becomes greater rather than appeased, and so a harem is built up progressively.

595 The changes introduced by colonization in the economic
178 life of this people have not resulted in a decrease of polygamy. In the absence of exact figures we must be satisfied with simple visual observations, but in certain regions one has the impression that the harems have become smaller but, on the other hand, that the number of polygamists has increased, and therefore [378] the desire for polygamy, that is, its affective cause, has
[65] not diminished. Nor does the extra tax frighten or stop the polygamists. The great means for changing the Nkundó attitude in this realm will always be the action of the missions and the penetration of Christian ethics, seconded by a government attitude favoring monogamy. (1)

[648] 1. The favorable attitude of the colonial government toward monogamy is expressed chiefly in the permission given to a polygamist's extra wives to abandon their husband in order to contract a monogamous union, preferably in a mission, under the supervision of missionaries.

[177] Another means, undoubtedly secondary but still important, is the example of European couples. The Blacks are imitative, and native women envy the lot of the white woman, so that European households are propaganda for monogamy when they behave well.